



Fakulti Seni Gunaan Dan Kreatif

**CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY STROKE
AS MEANING OF ART**

TANG SOK SING

**Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan Dengan Kepujian
(Seni Halus)
2016**

CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY STROKE AS MEANING OF ART

TANG SOK SING

Projek ini merupakan salah satu keperluan untuk
Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian
(Seni Halus)

Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

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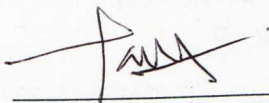
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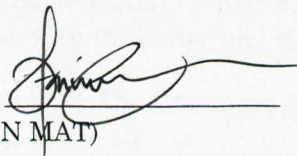
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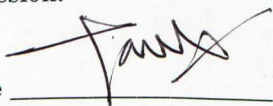
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(MOHAMAD FAIZUAN BIN MAT)

Penyelia

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ABSTRACT

Chinese art have been explored over 3000 years. There was a Chinese art form that haven't influence by the western country, which is Chinese calligraphy. Due to the tools that been used in create Chinese calligraphy art, it is hard to be empoison by other art form. Although Chinese calligraphy art is unique, but also due to its characteristics, most of the artists still dilemma that performing Chinese calligraphy art must wrote out Chinese calligraphy words or characters. The main purpose of this study is to transform the way of presenting Chinese calligraphy art.

Qualitative and quantitative method have been used in collecting the data. Document study and observation was interpret in this research. All the findings is important in this study. All the findings and the analysis data is helpful for explore the ways to present the artwork.

Installation art method have been used in present the artwork. Not like the precise moments, Chinese calligraphy not predicament that only perform in the ways that is like a painting. But it is also can be perform in installation art. This research also aim to create the awareness to the people protect the essence of calligraphy art.

ABSTRAK

Seni Cina telah diterokai lebih 3000 tahun. Salah satu seni Cina yang belum dipengaruhi oleh negara barat adalah kaligrafi Cina. Disebabkan alat-alat yang telah digunakan dalam mencipta seni kaligrafi Cina, ia adalah sukar dipengaruhi seni. Namun begitu, masih ada kebanyakan artis masih dilema dalam mengaplikasikan seni kaligrafi Cina dalam bentuk menulis kaligrafi Cina. Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengubah cara mempersembahkan seni kaligrafi Cina.

Kaedah kualitatif dan kuantitatif telah digunakan dalam mengumpul data. Pembacaan dokumen dan pemerhatian yang berkaitan juga diaplikasikan dalam membuat kajian. Semua penemuan yang penting dalam kajian ini. Semua penemuan dan analisis data adalah berguna untuk meneroka cara-cara untuk mempersembahkan karya seni.

Kaedah seni pemasangan telah digunakan untuk mempersembahkan karya ini. Kaligrafi cina tidak terkongkong dengan mempersembahkannya dengan cara yang seperti gantung. Tetapi ia juga boleh melaksanakan dalam seni pemasangan. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk memberi kesedaran kepada rakyat melindungi intipati seni kaligrafi.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Chinese characters is one kind of the written language in the world. Malaysia is a country that stand by different ethnic which is Malay, Chinese, India and so on. Due to the formation of the society, the society also influence by different cultural. Art scene in Malaysia also become unique due to the formation of society without the exception. The artist in Malaysia until now still stick on the modernism. However, at the European country, the art movement now is contemporary art period. This circumstance viewed that Malaysia art scene was outside the mainstream of current art period. However, there was a lot of artists nowadays were try to move a step further. Despite of this reality, we cannot deny that the ambiance of art in Malaysia also is one of the factor.

Most of the artist especially Chinese calligrapher still remain the mindset which produced the calligraphy artwork based on the Chinese words or characters. Chinese words and characters is important in an artwork. However, meaning behind the artwork in much more important for artists to emphasize. In addition, art is a good platform for us to transfer the message to the audience. Despite the beauty in an artwork, stress on the meaning of an artwork for better

education. Furthermore, the unique of the Chinese words not only based on the formation of the words, but also emphasize on the movement and the rhythm of the words. Hence, this research is more emphasize on the calligraphy stroke based on the movement and the rhythm of the words rather than focus on the beauty in an artwork.

1.1 Research Problem

Chinese calligraphy is an essence of Chinese society. Every single word that has been produce show the wisdom of humans. As Ishikawa Kyuyoh (2011) claims,

“In calligraphy, every action that the calligrapher undertakes vis-à-vis the medium –every contact between the brush and the paper – elicits an opposite and equal reaction. The calligrapher is continuously parrying the energy that rebounds from the medium even as she continues to pour the energy into the medium through the brush. That continuing reciprocity of action and reaction animates the drama that unfolds as a work of calligraphy. (p.1)

Chinese calligraphy has been regarded as art since the birth of the China culture. However, most of the artists always express their works through wrote out the sentence or words. For example, when they try to show the love between the couple relationship, they will write out the word 爱 (love). Soloman (2000) claims that overall people is reading the text in translation and trying to understand the spirit of calligraphy. Hence, from the statement, researcher found out that there was lack of exploration on the calligraphy stroke as the meaning of art expression. Therefore, researcher’s aim to study that calligraphy stroke can be act as meaning of art. At the end of this research, researcher will try to find out a way to express the meaning of art through the calligraphy stroke.

Definition: vis-à-vis: face to face

1.2 Research questions

- What is the form of calligraphic characters?
- What is the potential of stroke calligraphy as meaning of art?
- How to create a Chinese calligraphy artwork based on calligraphy stroke?

1.3 Research objectives

- To study the Chinese calligraphy strokes.
- To analyze the potential of stroke calligraphy as meaning of art
- To produce a new artwork expressing the emotion based on the calligraphic stroke.

1.4 Research significance

There was two potential research significance for the following:

- Enlightening that calligraphic stroke can as a way to expressing emotion
- Contribute a new way to present the Chinese calligraphy art

1.5 The Scope of the research

Chinese calligraphy is a subject to explore and study. However, most of the artists always direct using the Chinese characters and words to produce an artwork. Therefore, this study will focus on the calligraphy stroke can act as meaning of art expression. Hence, this study will limits to the scope to search the ways to produce the artwork based on the calligraphy stroke.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Generally, calligraphy can be divided into different kinds of calligraphy such as Islamic calligraphy, Chinese calligraphy, Japanese calligraphy and others. Different with Arabic and alphabets, Chinese characters are unique due to the formation of the words. Chinese characters emerged around 8000 thousand years and nowadays the calligraphy had been explored as art of making beautiful handwriting. Chinese calligraphy is unique in a perspective of world art due to the particulars features cannot be found in European or Islamic writing. According to The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2000) point out that the ranking of Chinese calligraphy is the most important vehicle for individual expression. By the fourth century in China, writing become a fine art in China. Hearn (as cited in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000) stated that calligraphy appreciated in the same way as abstract art because the calligraphy was composed following the fixed sequence by following the artist's gesture, re-experiencing the kinesthetic action of creation as preserved in the inked lines.

In addition, calligraphy has been developed into different types of writing system such as typography. This phenomenon shows that the potential of calligraphy can act as meaning of art.

2.1 What is Chinese calligraphy?

According to Ishikawa Kyuyoh (2011) stated that under the traditional, Western classification, calligraphy and oil painting are “visual art”. Chinese calligraphy is a visual art and has been launched thousand years ago. Chinese characters (sinographs, logographs) have a known of history over 3200 years, with the earliest forms visible on the so-called oracle bones.” Calligraphy” (*shufa*) not only represents “the art and the discipline of writing”, but it also reveals the “written paradigm” (written “*shu*” +paradigm ”*fa*”).According to Chen (2003) indicated that the writing of Chinese characters has been developed into a special high-level art in the world. Chinese script was transform from oracle bone script into seal script, cursive script, official script and regular script. Nowadays, most of the society were using the regular script but we still can saw the different type of Chinese script still appear on the old building or some books that have been stored in the museum.

Chinese words not only as a tool of communication, it also bring a lot of impact towards society and the cultural. According to Qian (2007) stated that Chinese calligraphy has developed various styles and schools and also play an important part of the national cultural heritage. Hence, it perform that Chinese calligraphy is a crucial linkage in the Chinese society. Instead of that, a lot of calligrapher also believe through writing the calligraphy, it can help us release tension and also drill with our personality and endurance. Review to the passed exhibition which is Biographies of Lian Po and Lin Xiangru, from the Crawford Collection, through the masterpiece done by Huang Tingjian reflect the Huang’s Felling that his banishment was the result of someone’s personal

wickedness. Chinese calligraphy have a special essence that is helping someone to release their mind. Barnhart acknowledged that writing calligraphy is a veritable record of the process of artistic creation. It include the rhythm or mood grows with confidence and sureness of purpose, and the movement of the brush when move faster and more boldly, its show exciting meaning behind the work.

Chinese characters nowadays has been transform into two type, that is simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese. The country such as Taiwan, certain area in China still using the traditional Chinese but in Malaysia, the simplified Chinese was using among the society. Simplified Chinese characters were promoted as a command written language and replace most of the traditional characters. Hence, China remain the standard writing system while Hong Kong and Taiwan continue to use the traditional characters.

2.1.1 History of Chinese characters

The evolution of Chinese characters matured during the Qin dynasty. Before the Qin dynasty, most of the Chinese develop are picture like and wrote down based on the outline of the object. The Shu Duan (Calligraphy Theory) by Zhang Huaiguan during the Tang Dynasty say: '[Jie] watched the various combinations of stars, and studied the veins of turtle shells and the flying trace of the bird, from which he learned all kinds of beauties, so that he could invent the characters.' The following table show the transformation of the Chinese characters.

2.2 The 永 “yong” and stroke order

In writing Chinese characters that have eight basic way of moving the brush, called strokes. There is a statement about Fu Xi: “Upwards, watching the celestial phenomena; downwards,

learning formulas on the ground. Observe animal character at the right place; Analyze phenomena depending on others as well as one's own efforts." The strokes Chinese character that include all the stroke is 永 (*yong*). 永(*yong*) is made up of a dot stroke, a horizontal stroke, a vertical stroke, a left falling stroke, a right falling stroke, a rising stroke, a turning stroke and a hook stroke. According to Yen (2005), he agreed that the calligraphic brush perfectly showed the happy marriage between the simplicity in structure and versatility in application.

Kane (2006) indicates the Chinese characters are written in a systematic order which is from left to right, top to bottom. From the statement, we found out that Chinese calligraphy or Chinese characters is a very discipline words. The formation of the Chinese characters not only showed the essence of the Chinese society, but also reveal the intelligent of our ancient.

In addition, the order of strokes is important, partly for aesthetic function, and because when the strokes joined rapidly and written in right order just can produce a recognizable "running" character. (Kane, 2006)

According to Iezzi (2013), she pointed out that the word "calligraphy" (*shufa*) is indeed composed of the character which the *shu* is means writing and *fa* is represent the law or method.

Chinese characters actually are form by strokes and it will forms a words after following the creation of the words. It will become a Chinese characters based on the forms. Chinese society strongly believe that every single people must write a good Chinese calligraphy. This is because Chinese calligraphy always link to personal identity which means *renpin* (人品) in Chinese words. According to Zhao (1988) stated that

Wang Xizhi's *renpin* is lofty, therefore his calligraphy can be classified as the work of *shen* (*shenpin*, miraculous work, the highest grade in calligraphy assessment) As a sharp

contrast, there are those slaves and small people (*nulixiaofu*), even callow brats (*ruchou zhi zi*, lit. children who still stink on milk), who learn to write in the morning and already brag about their calligraphic capability in the evening. These people are shallow, vulgar and despicable. Despicable!

Nowadays, youth are not concern about the Chinese handwriting. The flow and the formation of the stroke always leave behind while writing. They managed to write out the form of the words rather than concern about meaning behind the word. In addition, most of the people prefer on typing and printing rather than writing. This circumstances were certainly contributory factor that Chinese calligraphy were leave behind. Yang (2015) reported that Chinese characters are using in many country such as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam and so on. This phenomenon show that Chinese words are able to become a powerful communication tools.

They was a lot of Chinese characters cultural festival has been organizing to raise up the awareness about the Chinese characters. For example, the Taiwan government found out that Chinese characters are cultural unique and also is a valuable asset. Hence, the Taipei City Government Department of Cultural Affairs founded the Chinese characters festival to promote the culture and artistry associated with written Chinese.

2.3 What is semiotic?

According to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857), semiotics is a studies of signs within society is conceivable. It would be part of the social psychology and consequently of general psychology. On the other hand, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839) claims that semiotic are focus on three aspects of signs, there is iconic, indexical and symbolic dimensions.

Semiotics has been well applied in different area such as films, theaters, architecture and so on. People can easily understand the meaning through a symbol or signs. Brian stated that semiotics is concerned with the meaning and generates meaning through different aspects which is language, images and objects. As example, designer will discover different kind of visual images and language when form a new symbol or signs. When the symbols or signs is used for society, the signs that has been created must be understandable.

On the other hand, Atkin (2013) restatement about the signs in semiotic studies. He realized that not every characteristics of the object is relevant to signification, only certain features of an object is enable to signify it.

Thomas (2001) stated that the phenomenon that discriminates life forms from inanimate objects is semiosis. This can be defined simply as that all living organisms have potential to produce and understand signs.

Furthermore, Thomas (2001) also state that human signs was encoding by two primary kind of referents that is denotative and connotative. Denotative is the initial referent a sign intends to capture. Meanwhile, the connotation is an extensional process and the referents are knowns as connotation.

2.4 Liu Shu (六书象形)

Chinese characters had developed start from hieroglyphics. Although it has been developed, however the formation of a Chinese characters are based on the *liu shu* (六书象形), six-scripts. Previously, most of the Chinese characters does not have a rule or any laws to form a word.

Therefore, when we are inquired back into ancient Chinese script, most of the script are not complete and meaning less.

Qian, Zhuzhong and Fang, Desheng (2007) studied from Shuo found out that Chinese characters are based on liu shu(六书), the six categories of characters which is “pictograms,” “ideograms,” “ideogram compounds,” “phono -semantic compounds,” “rebus,” and “derivative cognates.” According to Sun (2014) she claimed that Liu Shu is important in the development of philology and critical interpretation of ancient text.

2.4.1 Pictograms

Pictograms probably is the basic Chinese characters forms. According to Wu (2007), he stated that Chinese characters have been develop as pictorial symbols into straight-line and square-shaped forms. Pictograms means picture-like. According to the history, ancient form a Chinese characters based on the shape or the outline they saw. Academic level and the epoch during prehistorical period are not advance if compared. Hence, most of the words that created is every basic. The following picture showed the example of pictograms Chinese words.







Oracle Bone Script	Seal Script	Clerical Script	Semi-Cursive Script	Cursive Script	Regular Script (Traditional)	Meaning
						Sun
						Moon
						Mountain
						Water
						Rain
						Wood
						Rice Plant
						Human

Figure 1: The formation of chinese calligraphy words.
(Sources from : http://www.dianliwenmi.com/postimg_893346.html)

2.4.2 Ideograms

Ideograms in create Chinese characters have been classify into two, one is means to point out the matter another one is link with the symbol or sign. The method which point out the matter also have linkage with pictograph. For example, the word root in Chinese is *ben* “本”. This words consists of two basic Chinese characters which is mu “木” and yi “一”. The yi “一” in this situation categorized as a symbol and the mu “木” is a pictograph. Hence, when the symbol was put near the bottom of the mu “木” is to signify the place of basic or roots. The another method is using symbol to express abstract concept which we can signify through the word yi “一”, er

“二”, san “三”. The yi “一” means one. When add more one line it become two, which means er “二”. This situation showed that using some symbol and signs to form a words.

2.4.3 Ideogram compounds

Ideogram compounds is a very interesting theory in forming Chinese characters. It is combining two Chinese characters into one new characters. In the rule of ideograms compound, people who read through the words can figure out the meaning behind the word. In addition, in ideograms compound, the words have been using to form the new characters always is the basic and simple words. As example, the word ming “明” is combine with two basic characters which is ri “日”, mean sun; and the yue “月” mean moon. When this two characters combined together it means ming “明”, which mean tomorrow and bright.

2.4.4 Phono-semantic compounds

Phono-semantic compounds theory plays an important in the formation of chinese characters. Phono semantic means the two sound-like words combine together. It also refer to the shape and the sounds of the words. Therefore, the words have been using in forming a new characters always link with the radical of the words. For example, the words wen “蚊” is mean mosquito. The chong “虫” is the radical of the words. Meanwhile, the chong “虫” mean bugs or insects in Chinese. It is refer to that wen “蚊” also is one kind of insect. Another side of the word wen “文” is refer to the sound that produce by mosquito. So when this two words combine together it bring out the meaning wen “蚊” that indicate meaning of mosquito.